

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:
evaluating a queue of requests of items to be picked from a carousel based on a set of priorities;
operating a carousel based on said evaluating; and
filling a restocking package with items held in said carousel in response to said operating.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said filling comprises, when an item to be picked is in the carousel:
identifying a carousel item printer;
printing a barcode label for the item;
waiting for a barcode label scan message;
moving the carousel; and
waiting for a scan of the barcode corresponding to the item picked.
3. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising generating an exception list for items not in the carousel.
4. The method of claim 3 additionally comprising:
identifying a non-carousel item printer; and
generating a bar code for each item on said exception list.
5. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising filling the restocking package at a configurable time.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein said queue contains items to be picked for more than one patient.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein said queue contains items to be picked for more than one dispensing device.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein said queue contains items to be picked for more than one decentralized location.
9. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising checking admission, discharge, transfer and order change information for each item in the queue.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein said evaluating is performed dynamically based on user provided priorities.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said user provided priorities for evaluating the queue are based on the time of day.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein said filling is paused, said method additionally comprising picking an item from the carousel on-demand during said pause.
13. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising performing dose calculations when an item in the queue is a dose and the specific dose is not present in said carousel.
14. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising displaying a plurality of items to be picked wherein said items comprise a kit in response to an order for the kit.
15. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising manually checking the contents of a restocking package.
16. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising determining if an item to be picked belongs in said queue.
17. The method of claim 16 wherein said determining includes determining based on a set of fill priorities.
18. The method of claim 16 wherein said determining includes determining based on a status of the carousel.
19. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising tracking a lot number for each item stocked into the carousel.
20. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising determining the frequency with which an item is picked, and identifying a bin to contain the item based on said frequency.
21. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising determining the frequency with which an item is picked, and removing said item from the carousel when the frequency falls below a predetermined value.
22. The method of claim 21 additionally comprising adding said item to the carousel when the frequency is above said predetermined value.
23. The method of claim 1 wherein when an item in said queue is located in a controlled substance vault, said method additionally comprising:

sending a request to open the door of the vault.

24. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising processing returned items.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein said processing of returned items

comprises:

crediting an account for a returned item;

returning the item to the carousel; and

updating the carousel's inventory records.

26. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising a cycle counting process

comprising:

presenting a bin for counting; and

accepting the count along with the date and time.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said cycle counting process is based on one of DEA codes and previously identified items.

28. The method of claim 26 wherein said cycle count process is initiated at scheduled times.

29. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising generating a request for an item whenever the quantity of said item falls below a par value.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said par value is a dynamic value based on one of current usage and historic usage.

31. A method, comprising:

filling an envelop with items in a centralized storage location;

delivering said envelop to a dispensing device at a decentralized location; and

inserting said envelop into a lock-lidded, patient specific location in said dispensing device.


32. The method of claim 31 additionally comprising scanning a bar code on said envelop to identify a patient specific location for said envelop and for updating the dispensing device's records.

33. The method of claim 31 additionally comprising a tote containing patient specific envelops, and wherein said inserting includes placing said tote into the dispensing device.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein said tote contains a chip having information about the contents of said tote, said method additionally comprising dispensing from said tote, and modifying the information in said chip in response to said dispensing.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein said centralized location includes an automation device, said method additionally comprising returning said tote to said centralized location, and connecting said tote to said automation device, said automation device accessing said information in said chip.

36. The method of claim 31 additionally comprising tracking delivery times of said envelopes.

37. A method, comprising: 
filling a restocking package with items in a centralized storage location;
loading a plurality of restocking packages into a device;
delivering the device containing the plurality of restocking packages to a dispensing device at a decentralized location; and
connecting said device carrying a plurality of restocking packages to the dispensing device.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein said device is a cart and said restocking packages include a plurality of patient specific envelopes.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said cart contains a chip having information about the contents of said cart, said method additionally comprising dispensing from said cart, and modifying the information in said chip in response to said dispensing.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein said centralized location includes an automation device, said method additionally comprising returning said cart to said centralized location, and connecting said cart to said automation device, said automation device accessing said information in said chip.

41. The method of claim 37 additionally comprising tracking delivery times of restocking packages.